



Parks and Recreation Department
Tuesday, September 18, 2007

Meeting

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Parks and Recreation Department Parks Board was held on Tuesday, September 18, 2007 at the One Texas Center, 301. W. 2nd Street, 3rd Floor Training Room 305.

Board Members Present: Board Chair, Linda Guerrero, Board Vice-Chair, Jeb Boyd, Parliamentarian/Secretary, Mark Vane, Marilyn Bostick, Jeff Francell, Hector Ortiz and Danette Chimenti.

Board Members Absent: Clint Small

Staff Members Present: Warren W. Struss, Stuart Strong, Ricardo Soliz and Butch Smith.

A. Meeting Called to Order

Board Chair Guerrero called the meeting to order.

B. Approval of Minutes

Board Member Francell moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Board Member Boyd. Motion passed.

C. Citizen Communications

None

D. Other Business

1. Briefing on the Colorado Corridor Partnership Plan

Butch Smith, PARD Planner, informed the Board that the Partnership has received an award from Envision Central Texas, for community stewardship “Raising Public Awareness” and that Trust for Public Lands has made this project their number one project in Texas. Kevin Anderson, Austin Water Utility, provided informational slides on “Discovering the Colorado – A Vision for the Austin Bastrop River Corridor.” Mr. Anderson indicated that their objective is to recognize the value of the Colorado River

and to work cooperatively to protect and enhance its resources. Secondly he talked about strategies that involve community stakeholders to build support, knowledge and awareness of the river and to promote options to protect the river. Other strategies include: 1) developing a mission and goals; 2) raising awareness of the river and the partnership; 3) research corridor resources and conditions; 4) identifying priority issues and concerns of the community; 5) seeking community based visions and recommendations; 6) distributing the “Discovering the Colorado” plan; 7) seeking partners to implement river projects and 8) continuing to study and monitor the corridor, revisiting the plan and continuing the conversation.

2. Briefing on the Elisabet Ney Museum Comprehensive Preservation Plan Master Plan.

Mary Collins Blackmon, Curator of the Museum, briefed the Board on the current preservation plan. She indicated that the restoration goal is to upgrade the building and its infrastructure, and the landscape surrounding the museum. The museum has been recognized at the local, state and national levels, and is listed nationally on the list of historic sites. Funding for the restoration comes from the White House - Save America’s Treasures Program. Currently, plans call for addressing the deterioration of the building, preserving it to its original design, and upgrading it to meet accessibility standards. The project also calls for upgrading the barn and the living quarters of her assistant as well. Ms. Blackmon indicated that the Museum is initiating a series of public briefings to gain valuable public input. Interested stakeholders, neighborhood associations, landscape and other arts groups, plus friends and supporters of the museum have received notices of the upcoming briefings. The restoration will: 1) fulfill the public mandate of the City and the Department to preserve the museum; 2) assist in developing a preservation maintenance plan; and 3) create an endowment.

E. Other Business

1. Make a recommendation to the Board regarding the use and improvement of parkland and Zilker Park by the Zilker Lofts Project.

Nikelle Meade, Brown and McCarroll, L.L.P., said that the name of the project has changed from Zilker Lofts Project to Zilker Parks Residences. They are asking for approval of an agreement between the City and the Developer that allows them to proceed with aesthetic improvements to the project, but with identified benefits to the City. Agreement terms include the following benefits to the developer: 1) temporary construction staging; 2) permission to share rainwater collection and drainage infrastructure; 3) a no build agreement from the department; and 4) tree mitigation on parkland. Benefits to the City are: 1) \$50,000 in parkland dedication and an additional \$200,000 for parkland and drainage improvements; 2) design and installation of landscapes and drainage improvements on parkland at City’s direction; 3) rainwater harvesting system for irrigation; 4) on-going maintenance of all installed improvements;

5) better building design that is more compatible with parkland. The project will have minimal impact to the hike and bike trail. Board Member Ortiz moved approval of the recommendation, seconded by Board Member Bostick. Motion carried 7-1.

2. Make a recommendation on the taking of 5.5 acres of parkland at John Trevino Park at Morrison Ranch for the expansion of F.M. 969

No members of the TxDOT staff were in attendance to address this issue. Board Member Boyt indicated that TxDOT was not really interested in any of the concerns the Board had, therefore was going to pursue other avenues to acquire the 5.5 acres of parkland at John Trevino Park: (a six month application process mitigating only the fair market value of the acquired land). He indicated that the Land and Facilities committee met and voted 4-0 in favor of a resolution to work with City Council Members who sit on the CAMPO Board to help influence TxDOT to transfer portions of MoKan Right-of-Way to PARD as mitigation to address any gaps along the Southern Walnut Creek Trail. Board Member Chimenti moved to approve the resolution, seconded by Board Member Francell. Motion carried 6-0.

3. Make a recommendation regarding an ACWP Wastewater Improvement project request for construction and staging area at the Norwood Tract off-leash park.

The Austin Clean Water Program, Austin Water Utility and Public Works Department are proposing to use a portion of the Norwood Estates Park as a temporary work space area and potential temporary staging and materials storage site for the Harper's Branch Wastewater Line improvement project. The project will provide wastewater system improvements that address overflows related to deteriorated infrastructure and insufficient pipe capacity. The project is scheduled to begin construction in January 2008 and be completed by January 2009. Most of the dog park will be used, although a small portion of the park will need to be closed off. All trees adjacent to the work area will be protected and no trees within the park will be removed. All disturbed land will be restored and revegetated to existing or better conditions. All site restoration will be completed in accordance with the Standards of Specifications and Construction Standards of the City of Austin. The Contractor will continue to work with the department regarding any potential mitigation for the use of the park, per the Memorandum of Understanding.

Garner Sumner, South Austin resident, had questions regarding the proposed Mabel Davis Dog Park and the plans for the old house on the Norwood Estates. Director Struss reported that the Mabel Davis Park would be a fully operated facility keeping in mind the safety of the dogs and the public and that the house at the Norwood Estates would be restored if funding could be found.

Board Member Chimenti moved approval of the project pending final mitigation, seconded by Board Member Boyt. Motion carried 6-0.

4. Approve a resolution to the Planning Commission and the City Council, a code amendment to the Waterfront Overlay Ordinance that includes; 1) bonus provisions for building heights; and 2) to re-establish the Waterfront Planning Advisory Board.

Item was pulled by Board Chair Guerrero.

F. Director's Report

Director Struss reported that the ACL festival was a huge success except for a fire that appears to have been accidental. He indicated that the fire is still under investigation. Also, a de-brief will be held with neighborhood associations and other interested stakeholders to look at successes of the event and to look at improving others. The event was the 6th annual event held at the park. The Mexican American Cultural Center grand opening was a huge success and Director Struss publicly thanked the staff for making it a really grand opening. Diez y Seis celebration at Republic and Waterloo parks were also huge successes. The Town Lake Park grand opening was also successful and currently is in a re-naming process. Requests will be submitted within a 90-day period and the Board will make a recommendation to the City Council on the re-naming of the park sometime after January 2008. Staff and Board Members will attend the annual National Recreation and Parks Association conference in Indiana, and Director Struss hopes that the department will be rewarded to accreditation status for which it has worked so hard for over the past couple of years.

G. Items for the Board

Navigation – did not meet; however, Board Member Francell asked about the status of the Barton Springs Master Plan. Director Struss indicated that Council had approved funding for the short term goals of the plan. Board Member Ortiz requested discussion on having staff make recommendations on issues facing the Board. Board Chair Guerrero, added that Board Member Ortiz's request could be discussed at the annual retreat along with other items and suggested that a solid 4-hour retreat be held. Board Member Boyt indicated that there is increased interest about the public having access to BCP lands.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.